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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, April 12

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)

April 13, 2007

09:28

Arrived at Kantei.

10:04

Listened to speech to the Diet by Chinese Premier Wen at Lower House chamber.

11:31

Met at Kantei with US Pacific Forces Commander Keating. Met afterward with Yukio Okamoto, diplomatic commentator.

13:54

Met with Minister in charge of Economic and Fiscal Policy Ota and Chief Cabinet Secretary Shiozaki.

14:41

Attended Japan-China high-level economic dialogue held at the

Foreign Ministry's Iikura Guesthouse.

15:26

Met at Kantei with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Matoba, followed by political commentator Hisayuki Miyake.

16:01

Met with Special Advisor Nemoto, followed by Assistant Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Saka.

17:00

Met with Vice Finance Minister Fujii, Budget Bureau Chief Tsuda and Tax Bureau Chief Ishii, followed by Internal Affairs and Communications Senior Vice Minister Ono and Fire and Disaster Management Agency Head Takabe.

18:07

Attended reception welcoming Chinese Premier Wen at Grand Prince Hotel Akasaka.

18:57

Dined with entertainer Tsurutaro Kataoka and journalist Tomoyo

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Nonaka at French restaurant Mikuni.

20:05

Attended event for Chinese intangible cultural heritage at National Theater in Hayato-cho.

21:12

Returned to his official residence.

4) Japan, China to launch high-level talks: Economic issues to be settled at initiative of politicians

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)  
April 13, 2007

The governments of Japan and China yesterday held a meeting in Tokyo to pave the way for the planned establishment of a high-level dialogue by economic ministers. Participants agreed on a policy of settling economic issues at the initiative of politicians. The meeting brought together Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Premier Wen Jiabao as well. Abe expressed hopes for future achievements, noting, "This dialogue will be a new step for Japan-China economic relations." The first formal meeting will take place in Beijing within this year.

This is the first time for Japan to establish a setting for bilateral talks taken part in by cabinet ministers from more than one economy-related ministry, indicating its stance of attaching importance to relations with China.

The planned dialogue will aim at cooperation in a wide range of areas, including energy, the environment, and the protection of intellectual property rights. The Japanese side wants to see improvement in investment conditions, including the easing of restrictions on foreign capital, while the Chinese side hopes Japan will transfer environmental and energy-conserving technologies.

The meeting yesterday also brought together Foreign Minister Taro Aso, who is to play a leading role in the high-level economic dialogue; Finance Minister Koji Omi; Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Akira Amari; and State Minister for Economic and Fiscal Policy Ota from the Japanese side and Ma Kai, head of the National Development and Reform Commission; Commerce Minister Bo Xilai; and others from the Chinese side.

Aso and Deputy Premier Zeng Peiyan were designated as co-chairmen. The Beijing talks will be the first meeting for Zeng to take part, since he did not come to Japan this time.

Aso during the meeting indicated a perception that though Japan and China have forums for dialogues at the ministry level, it is necessary to settle difficult issues at a higher level. Aso made

this comment with such issues as China's strengthened foreign capital regulation and opaque legal system in mind, which Japanese companies complain impede their business activities in China.

Participants exchanged views on economic cooperation in Asia and efforts to make the yuan a more flexible currency.

5) Ruling, opposition party leaders pay courtesy calls on Wen

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Excerpts)  
April 13, 2007

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Leaders of the ruling and opposition parties paid courtesy calls on visiting Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao yesterday. Liberal Democratic Party Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa, who supports Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's efforts to improve relations with China, and New Komeito President Akihiro Ota separately met with Wen and stressed the need for the ruling parties of the two countries to promote personnel exchanges. In the opposition camp, Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) President Ichiro Ozawa, Japanese Communist Party Chairman Kazuo Shii, and Social Democratic Party President Mizuho Fukushima met Wen separately. Both ruling and opposition parties indicated their eagerness to improve relations with China.

LDP Secretary General Nakagawa, who visited China last month, told Premier Wen: "I would like to make utmost efforts to bring about a tour of China by Prime Minister Abe by the end of this year and a visit to Japan by President Hu Jintao at an early date. This is the wish of all LDP members." Executive Council Chairman Yuya Niwa, Policy Research Council Chairman Shoichi Nakagawa, Upper House Chairman Mikio Aoki, and Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Toshihiro Nikai were present when Nakagawa met Wen. Nakagawa implied his confidence as a leader in promoting political ties between Japan and China.

Policy Research Council Chairman Nakagawa, though, has said that China poses a threat to Japan. Supposedly out of consideration for Wen, the secretary general said to him: "I hope you will cooperate in melting the ice between Japan and North Korea over the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea." New Komeito's Ota said to Wen: "I hope Japan and China will jointly tackle environmental issues," underscoring the idea that New Komeito gives priority to environmental protection.

In a meeting with Minshuto's Ozawa, Premier Wen said, "Mr. Ozawa made great efforts to move friendly China-Japan relations forward." Ozawa replied: "I was profoundly impressed by your Diet speech. The speech reminded me of the visit to Japan by Deng Xiaoping."

6) Wen's Diet speech draws variety of reactions, one describing it as "ice-melting" and another as "self-serving"

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
April 13, 2007

Visiting Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's Diet speech yesterday has elicited a variety of comments from ruling and opposition lawmakers.

LDP Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa: "It was a historical speech showing a strong resolve to place priority on Japan. It was significant that it touched on exchanges between Sun Wen and Zhou Enlai and Japanese people. His speech also emphasized a humanitarian spirit beyond Chinese people's postwar bitterness, showing the Chinese leadership's stance toward the history issue. He expressed hopes that Japan will play a greater role in the international community. It exemplified his ice-melting trip."

LDP Diet affairs chief Toshiaki Nikai: "It was a historic speech clearly showing his wishes to make this trip a springboard for good sustainable Japan-China relations. It was passionate. Premier Wen waved his hand many times to the packed crowd. I believe such an event will surely melt the ice. He naturally urged us not to forget

historical issues. We must not forget them. People's minds do not meet with unbending mindset."

Former LDP Secretary General Koichi Kato: "He spoke of the history issue carefully yet clearly. He indicated that the last major war was an act of aggression and that some military leaders brought it about. In a sense, he said without reservation things that were the opposite of the historical views expressed by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe before assuming office. The premier perhaps wanted to nail down Prime Minister Abe's new policy, although it has improved substantially. The speech was well composed."

Former LDP Vice President Taku Yamasaki: "Like his name, the speech was warm. He said, 'The mountain does not move with gales.' It means that despite an unfortunate history, the friendship between Japan and China will not change for generations to come, like a mountain. He also called for action by citing former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's statement. That must be taken as a message showing China's view on the Yasukuni Shrine issue."

New Komeito Representative Akihiro Ota: "It was a good speech, frankly expressing China's basic views and highlighting the importance of Japan-China relations to the peoples of the two countries. It portrayed China's future-oriented stance, positively evaluating Japan's postwar course without focusing on the country's grudges over historical issues."

Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama: "We can expect that Japan-China relations will head in a better direction. The government must take squarely his speech that was dominated by historical issues, seeking deeds."

LDP Lower House lawmaker Keiji Furuya: We did not have the text of his Diet speech, which was unusual. He skipped some parts, presumably intentionally. China's military spending has been growing yearly and it destroyed its own satellite. It's too self-centered for such a country to ask for assistance."

LDP Lower House member Koichi Hagiuda: "He underscored 'mutually beneficial ties,' but I wanted to hear a speech that as well-balanced. His speech was somewhat condescending."

LDP Lower House member Tomomi Inada: "Everyone applauded when he called for action, urging (the prime minister) not to visit Yasukuni Shrine. That was regrettable."

Minshuto Lower House member Akihisa Nagashima: "In my view, his speech was aimed at leaving the impression that Japanese culture stemmed from China and that China showed its magnanimity regarding unfortunate past events. He had an air of a leader of a major international player, however. If things go like this, Japan won't be able to best China. Japan needs to make all-out efforts."

Minshuto Lower House member Shu Watanabe: "He might have wanted to say that Japan's development started with Chinese culture and that the long history of friendship between the two countries has turned sour because of Japan. His speech was punctuated with China's traditional standpoints, albeit mildly. I felt China's strong wishes."

LDP policy chief Shoichi Nakagawa: "It was pragmatic and was like a diplomatic negotiation."

LDP General Council Chairman Yuya Niwa: "It was dotted with warnings, while giving consideration to Japan-China friendship."

Former Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura: "There will be no true friendship unless the two countries move forward outstanding bilateral issues, such as the East China Sea issue."

7) ODA to prioritize measures on global warming: MOFA advisory council calls for strengthening assistance for disaster prevention to be strengthened

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Full)  
April 13, 2007

The Foreign Ministry's (MOFA) study group has looked into measures to assist developing countries, which are vulnerable to the impact of global warming. The panel has compiled a report seeking the preferential handling of proposals for helping them deal with the impact of global warming, including the prevention of disasters and the effective use of water in implementing official development assistance (ODA).

The reason is because since it is already unavoidable for developing countries to be affected by global warming to some extent, it is a pressing issue to take measures against disasters and water and food shortages, which are expected to increase in the future. MOFA intends to expand assistance measures concerning climate change, including preferential interest rates on yen loans.

Developing countries will unavoidably face increased disasters caused by climate change and a serious shortage of water. In particular, countries with weak social infrastructure will face problems that they cannot settle on their own, including poverty and the spread of infectious diseases.

The report pointed out the need to strengthen their adaptability based on forecasts on the impact of global warming so as to settle those problems. It noted that all aid projects need to focus on strengthening adaptability right from the planning stage with future climate change in mind.

The report specifically stressed the importance of comprehensive water resources control and water recycling in such areas as Africa, which are expected to face a serious water shortage. It also urged that ODA projects in areas where food production is expected to fall, including part of Asia, should give importance to consolidating a stockpiling system and improving cultivation technology in areas.

8) Lower House panel passes national referendum bill; Bill to clear current Diet session

MAINICHI (Top Play) (Full)  
April 13, 2007

The House of Representatives Special Committee for Research on the Constitution yesterday approved a bill proposed by the ruling coalition that sets procedures for amending the Constitution by a majority of committee members from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its junior coalition partner New Komeito. While opposition members, who opposed a vote on the bill, were swarming the committee chairman, a bill proposed by the main opposition party, Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) was voted down. The

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ruling camp plans to pass the legislation at a plenary session of the Lower House today and start deliberating in the House of Councillors on April 16. It is now almost certain that the bill will clear the Diet during the current session.

The bill is designed to outline procedures for a national referendum needed to amend the Constitution. If the bill is approved, constitutional amendment procedures will be set for the first time since the Constitution of Japan came into force in 1947.

The opposition camp opposed the vote, saying deliberations had been insufficient. Committee Chairman Taro Nakayama, however, put the bill to a vote after declaring that time for debate was over. Minshuto has decided to oppose the bill at a Lower House plenary session today.

Meanwhile, senior members of the LDP and New Komeito reconfirmed yesterday that they would approve the bill in the Lower House on

April 13. The two ruling parties intend to explain the purpose of their bill and to start deliberations at an Upper House plenary session and Upper House Special Committee for Research on the Constitution on April 16 after the bill clears the Lower House. They aim to pass the bill through the Diet before May 3, Constitution Day.

The key elements of the legislation include: (1) the minimum age for granting voting rights would be set at 18, but the minimum voting age would be set at 20 until the voting age and adult age are lowered to 18 by revising the Public Office Election Law and the Civil Law; (2) approval of a majority of all valid ballots would be required for passage of an amendment; (3) although "constitutional committees" would be set in both chambers of the Diet, the panels would not carry out deliberations and constitutional amendment bills would not be submitted to the Diet for three years after the law comes into being; and (4) constitutional amendments would be classified according to which items they relate to.

The ruling coalition and Minshuto last May submitted their own bills. Although the ruling camp and the largest opposition party were discussing joint modifications, the ruling camp independently presented its own revised bill in March, and Minshuto also submitted this month another revised bill. The ruling coalition insisted that national referendums be held only for constitutional amendments, but Minshuto demanded that their scope be expanded.

9) US force realignment bill to clear Lower House today

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
April 13, 2007

The Lower House Committee on Security yesterday took a vote on the US force realignment bill aimed at carrying out the US force realignment plans smoothly and approved it by a majority of votes from the ruling parties. The major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) refused to take part in deliberations on the bill, claiming that the time for deliberations was insufficient, but it attended the voting session. The bill is to be approved in a Lower House plenary session today with a majority of votes from the ruling parties and be sent to the Upper House.

This is a time-limited bill introduced by the government with the aim of steadily implementing the realignment of the US Forces Japan (USFJ) as stipulated in the agreement between the governments of

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Japan and the United States last May and with the understanding of municipalities that will be affected. The bill will establish a new system for subsidies for municipalities that will accept a new burden of US military facilities. In order to help the US to construct infrastructure in Guam ahead of the transfer of 8,000 US Marines from Okinawa to Guam, the bill will set a special exception for the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), whose major purpose is to finance developing countries.

Municipalities subject to realignment-related subsidies will include Nago City, which houses Camp Schwab, the relocation site of the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, as well as the local governments that house Self-Defense Forces (SDF) bases and will accept the separate transfer of fighter training now carried out at Kadena Air Base.

10) Stick -- US force realignment bill -- likely to come with carrot -- new subsidies to affected local governments

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
April 13, 2007

With the special measures bill on US force realignment certain to be passed during the current Diet session, the government will accelerate its efforts to facilitate the implementation of specific steps, including the relocation of US military facilities. In this regard, the government has already allocated in the fiscal 2007 budget 5.1 billion yen in subsidies. It intends to begin possibly this fall distributing new subsidies to local governments willing to

accept the relocation of US bases. But this has already met with opposition from some local officials who argue: "Is the government trying to buy us off with money?" Whether the central government's subsidy plan will go smoothly as it expects remains to be seen.

The reason why the government and the ruling camp have prioritized the US force realignment bill during the current Diet session jammed with important bills is because of Shinzo Abe's first planned visit to the United States as prime minister starting April 26. For Abe, who stresses the importance of the Japan-US alliance, the bill if handled quickly is good material to impress President Bush with Japan's "enthusiasm."

"The bill charts how Japan and the US will share the duties, roles, and capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region, and we hope it will be enacted as swiftly as possible," said Administrative Vice Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya at a press briefing yesterday. What he has envisioned is the unified effort of Japan and US in the military area, with cooperation advancing through such programs as the missile defense (MD) system.

The US force realignment plan will affect 68 local municipalities. Certain municipalities, such as Okinawa's Nago City, the relocation site of the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, will be eligible for new subsidies. In order to speed up (the US force realignment plan), the government will allocate subsidies to affected municipalities each time they clear one of four stages: (1) when they announce their acceptance of the relocation; (2) when an environmental survey is launched; (3) when construction starts; and (4) when the relocation is completed.

it has been customary in Okinawa in the past to let the Defense Agency (now ministry) handle base issues, while regional development has been in the hand of the Okinawa Development Agency. But under

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the new arrangement, the Ministry of Defense will play a leading part in pushing for the result-oriented approach, as Defense Policy Bureau Director-General Kazuo Oko said: "We will determine the subsidy levels by rating by numbers the changes in facility space, the content of facility construction; new deployment of equipment, such as aircraft, changes in the number of personnel, and the contents of transferred training."

As of the end of February, only 46 local governments announced they have accepted and understand the realignment plan. The US force realignment bill includes an item of raising the central government's grant rate for public works projects to be implemented by local governments cooperating with the realignment.

Opposition parties are criticizing this "carrot and stick" approach by the government, with lawmaker Seiken Akamine of the Japanese Communist Party arguing: "It's a tactic to bring local governments into submission by the money power." The largest opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) did not vote for the bill, arguing, "The grounds for the calculation of Japan's portion (some 6.09 billion dollars) of the relocation cost of US Marines from Okinawa to Guam and how that money will be used are unclear."

11) Koizumi keeps silent on by-elections in Fukushima, Okinawa, declining flood of requests, probably out of consideration for Abe

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)  
April 13, 2007

Former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has declined all requests to stump for candidates in the by-elections for House of Councillors seats in Fukushima and Okinawa. A close aide to Koizumi said "If Koizumi takes action, a comparison will be surely made between him and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. He must have the view that doing nothing is the most effective support." By keeping silent, Koizumi seems to be giving consideration to the prime minister.

Koizumi has kept a low profile since he stepped down, but when he made an exception and appeared at a speech to support the LDP-backed candidate for a House of Representatives by-election last fall, the



hall was standing room only. Koizumi is still popular, so many requests are coming to him to stump for candidates for the Upper House election this summer.

But Koizumi has decided not to accept such requests in principle. Isao Iijima, secretary to Koizumi, said, "He may stump for those who supported his postal-privatization plan." Even though the postal rebels have been allowed back into the party, Koizumi still appears to want to see his own privatization plan carried out.

12) US Congressional Research Service report on military comfort women critical of Prime Minister Abe for contradictory statements

AKAHATA (Page 7) (Excerpts)  
April 13, 2007

By Shinji Yamazaki in Washington

This newspaper has learned that a report of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) has criticized as "basically contradictory" the assertions of Prime Minister Abe and Japanese government that "there was not coercion" (by the Japanese military of wartime comfort women), while continuing to uphold the statement of then

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Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono in 1993 that apologized to former comfort women. This newspaper obtained a copy of the CRS report on April 12 titled, "Japanese military's 'comfort women' system."

The report, focusing on a series of remarks made by Prime Minister Abe this March, points out while Abe reconfirmed the Kono Statement, parts of his statements are contradictory. As an example, the government presented a written cabinet reply to a Diet question on March 16 that stated: "Among the documents discovered by the government, we could find nothing that indicated direct coercion by the military or constituted authorities." The report also points out the judgment of Dutch courts that Dutch women (in Indonesia) were forced by the Japanese military into prostitution and raped.

13) US congressional report on wartime comfort women points out that there was military involvement at all stages

AKAHATA (Page 6) (Excerpts)  
April 13, 2007

By Shinji Yamazaki in Washington

A report by the US Congressional Research Service (CRS) titled "Japanese military's 'comfort women' system," criticizes moves in Japan to revise the 1993 Kono Statement. It re-introduces previously revealed evidence about the wartime comfort women that clearly proves deep involvement of the Japanese government and Japanese military.

The report cites as "moves to revise the Kono Statement in Japan the request for "a new study" by Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Shimomura, the establishment of a panel of influential Liberal Democratic Party lawmakers "to consider Japan's past and historical education," and statements by LDP policy chief Shoichi Nakagawa and Foreign Minister Taro Aso denying government involvement in the setting up of comfort stations.

The report lists much documented material that proves the existence of the comfort-women system.

14) Survey finds about 100 MSDF members married to foreign nationals

SANKEI (Top Play) (Excerpts)  
April 13, 2007

A survey conducted by the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) found that about 100 personnel are married to foreign nationals. The MSDF conducted the survey, taking seriously the fact that the wife of the petty officer second class who took home a floppy disk containing confidential data is a Chinese illegally living in Japan.

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When a SDF member gets married with a foreigner, no special permission is required, and there is no legal problem. A senior SDF member, however, said: "Although the freedom of marriage should be respected, members must use their discretion in marrying those who come from neighboring countries that could threaten Japan."

Taking the recent intelligence-leak incident serious, the MSDF conducted a survey of about 40,000 members and found that about 100 are married to foreign nationals. Most of them reportedly are from Southeast Asian countries or from China. The Ground Self-Defense Force and the Air Self-Defense Force, however, have not figured out

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how many members are married to foreigners and have no intention to conduct a survey in the future, according to their officials.

MSDF personnel find it difficult to find a spouse, given that they have to undertake long-term voyages, have to keep their itinerary confidential, and are out of contact while at sea. For this reason,

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an increasing number of members have married foreign women.

Each unit of the MSDF arranges matchmaking parties, but according to a senior MSDF member, "Young Japanese women do not join such parties in Yokosuka, and instead, foreigners working at restaurants and the like participate. Some of those foreigners get married to MSDF members."

DONOVAN